

TESTIMONY

Submitted by Karen Garlie, Director of Hospice Clinical Services
Masonicare Home Health and Hospice

Public Health Committee Public Hearing
March 29, 2021

SUPPORT: SB 1070 AN ACT ALLOWING ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO ISSUE HOME HEALTH ORDERS

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Karen Garlie, Director of Hospice Services for Masonicare Home Health and Hospice.

I support, SB 1070 pertaining to APRN and PA orders in home health and hospice agencies.

Historically, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) have not been permitted to sign orders or certify home health at a federal or state level. In many states, however, APRNs and PAs have been permitted to sign orders for hospice patients, but not certify for hospice services. In such states, hospice does not fall under home health as it does in Connecticut. This limitation has caused a significant impact for both home health and hospice specifically, that the practitioner cannot remain involved while the patient receives these services. For hospice in particular, it forces the patient to choose between receiving hospice care at end of life or losing their APRN or PA practitioner, who they have had a relationship with for many years at a vulnerable time in their life.

This has changed federally in March 2020 due to COVID. The CARES Act included **permanent** allowances for both APRNs and PAs to sign home health orders and determine eligibility for coverage. These allowances are contingent on the individual state's statutes and regulations. The hospice certification, however, remains a function of a physician.

In Connecticut an order was released on April 27, 2020, after advocacy from The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home to the DPH commissioner, expanding these allowances to include APRNs and PAs. This order is not permanent and is only in effect through the Governor's declared Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency.

Bill, SB 1070 *An Act Allowing Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants to Issue Home Health Orders*, would ensure these allowances are **permanent** and allow APRNs and PAs to sign orders for home health and hospice and to determine the eligibility for coverage for home health. This would allow these practitioners to remain involved in their patient's care and not force patients to choose between receiving end of life hospice care or their relationship with their practitioner.

Amending Sections 19-13-D65 through 19-13-D79 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies to replace the term “physician” with the term “healthcare practitioner”, defined as a physician, advanced practice registered nurse or physician assistant would make these allowances permanent.

Thank you,

Karen Garlie

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